

[CHEAP REPOSITORY. Number 22.]

SUNDAY READING.

THE
HARVEST HOME.



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How quickly does joy often suc-
ceed to sorrow; the day of cheer
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T H E

H A R V E S T H O M E.

HOW quickly does joy often succeed to sorrow; the day of cheerful hope to that of gloomy fear, and the season of plenty and abundance to that of want and scarcity! Not long since the dearth of bread in this land was such, that every countenance seemed to gather blackness: the very heavens also appeared to frown upon us; for the weather during a long time was so dismal, that it threatened to blast the approaching Harvest; we were made to feel that we were in the hands of God, and totally dependent on his mercy; having enjoyed

many years of plenty, without interruption, we had learnt to count upon the continuance of the same blessing and because God's goodness had been so common, we were so much the less thankful for it. How calamitous would a general blight upon our corn have proved at this season! every mind must shudder at such a thought: such a blight was threatened indeed but suddenly, and at the very point of time when it was most needed, the weather changed, and a season unusually favourable for getting in the fruits of the earth has succeeded.

Man, it may be remarked, is more ready to pray to God to help him out of his distresses, than to thank him when he has been delivered: for we are often merely selfish in such prayers we feel a pressing want of the blessing and we therefore cry to God for it but when it is obtained our whole en-

answered, we now are satisfied; we
 now careleſs about the matter, and
 forget to think of our benefactor.

But let us here endeavour to pre-
 ſent this forgetfulneſs of our preſent
 mercies from taking place in the minds
 of our readers, and let us invite them
 to come and contemplate with us that
 greatneſs and goodneſs of our Creator
 which are ſo obſervable at the time of
 harveſt.

There is indeed no part of the crea-
 tion to which we can turn our eyes
 without meeting with ſome proofs of
 the Divine power and mercy. Shall
 we lift up our eyes to the Heavens?
 There ſhines the brightneſs of the ſun,
 which God has placed in the firma-
 ment to give light and heat to the
 world. Shall we wait till the ſun is
 ſet? then the moon and the ſtars take

up the same language of praise, and tell of their Maker's power and goodness.

Shall we turn our eyes to the earth? see how the surface of it is spread forth like a carpet, decked with every thing to charm the eye, to delight the sense, and to supply the wants of man. Shall we look upon the great and wide ocean? There go the ships; and behold even the sea is filled with food for the use of man. "How manifold are thy works, O Lord, in wisdom thou hast made them all!"

The sight of these common objects of nature, used often to carry out the holy men of old in praise and adoration to God, of which we will mention an instance in the 65th Psalm, because it is applicable to the present time; a psalm penned after a long

rought, to which had succeeded some
 very plentiful and refreshing rains.
 The psalmist, while he walks abroad,
 and delights himself with the prospect
 of plenty which is on every side, breaks
 out in the following thanksgiving to
 the bountiful Giver of all things.

Praise waiteth for thee, O God! in
 Sion, and unto thee shall the vow
 be performed. O thou that didst
 hear our prayer, unto thee shall all
 flesh come.—Thou makest the out-
 goings of the morning and evening
 to rejoice. Thou visitest the earth
 and waterest it. Thou greatly en-
 richest it with the river of God,”
 for the clouds are compared to a riv-
 er in the air, sustained by the hand of
 the Almighty,) “Thou preparest
 corn when thou hast so provided for
 for it: Thou waterest the ridges
 thereof abundantly, thou settlest
 the furrows thereof, thou makest it
 soft with showers:” “Thou bless.

"eth the springing thereof. Thou
 "crownest the year with thy good-
 "ness, and thy paths drop fatness,
 "the little hills rejoice on every side.
 "The pastures are clothed with
 "flocks, the vallies also are covered
 "over with corn; they shout for joy,
 "they also sing."

To every one who is of the same
 mind with the psalmist the same kind
 of meditations will be very apt to oc-
 cur. Let us, however, here assist the
 reader, by naming a few subjects
 which he will do well to reflect upon
 while takes his walk amidst the reap-
 ers, and admires the plenty that is in
 the fields.

First then, how naturally ought the
 season of harvest to send our thoughts
 to the *great Author* of it! How clearly
 is his hand at this time seen! All the
 power and ingenuity of the whole

world cannot frame so much as a sin-
 gle ear of corn. The part which man
 has in procuring the corn is very small
 indeed. He in fact does *nothing*
 himself towards its growth; he only
 places it in a situation which from
 experience he has found to be favour-
 able to it, and then "he goeth away"
 and it springeth up he knoweth not
 how." The seed which he plants
 was in the first place given by God :
 when the sower has put it in the
 ground, there is then a work, or op-
 eration, carried on, in which man is
 not only unconcerned, but he does
 not even know how it is accomplished.
 The grain dies, and from that death a
 resurrection takes place, a fresh plant
 arises out of the ground, and this
 plant is nourished by means of roots
 hidden within the earth, which then
 shoot forth without the aid of man :
 in this secret manner are the different
 juices collected and sent through the

plant: by-and-by the flower blooms, the ear forms itself; and the corn takes the proper shape and substance: the rain in the mean time waters it, the dews descend, and the sun shines upon it: till at length it is fit for the use of man. In all this man can do nothing. It is during his absence even that this work is going on. If the grain is blighted, man cannot help it; if it grows too slowly he is not able to quicken it; he can only look on with hope and fear, and watch it in its different stages: he must ascribe all its growth to the unassisted power of the great Creator of all things.

Plain as the hand of the Creator is in the production of the corn, yet such is our natural stupidity, that while we gather the corn we often think no more of God in it, than the very cattle which draw it home. The farmer speaks of his own skill, and labour,

and pains. And when the grain is ripe, he lays it up in his barn, with much self applause, and begins to count his gains, not considering that all the praise in fact is due to God, and that every ear which is laid up is a proof of man's obligation to his Maker.

But let us here notice also the largeness of the Divine bounty. The works of God are upon a large scale; they are like himself infinite. The works of man are little and insignificant; it is but a small spot which his strength can water, but the showers of Heaven water a whole territory at once. It is but a few acres which the diligent labours of man can make productive; but God causes his sun to shine, and his dew to descend, and the whole earth is rendered fruitful. Look over that beautiful and extensive prospect: See as far as the eye

can reach how the fields are crowned with plenty ; extend the scene in your imagination, still the same rich view of the Divine bounty presents itself. Cross the wide ocean, and survey the different countries of which the earth consists. In all the varied productions of these different climates, we only meet with more and more signs of the Divine goodness. How are we then called upon to admire and adore that glorious Being who suffers no part of the earth to escape his kind and benignant notice.

With the extensiveness of this bounty let the *continuance* of it be considered. No sooner is the harvest got in, than again the seed is committed to the ground, and again the same scene returns upon us. Let us carry back our thoughts to the years that have been of old. How unwearied has been our great benefactor !

How unceasing the exertions of his goodness! How many generations have been fed and supported by it! Seasons have changed, but they have only presented different views of the Lord's mercy; and the cold of winter, the bloom of Spring, the heat of Summer, and the fruits of autumn, have each in their seasons manifested the same bounty and care of our Creator.

Having indulged in these pleasing reflections upon the Divine bounty, it seems proper in the next place to turn our attention to a more melancholy subject, I mean *our unworthiness of it*. For whom does the Lord open his stores, and provide with so liberal a hand? For a race of creatures who are touched with the most lively sense of his goodness, and love and honour him in proportion to these great obligations?

Do we then hear the reapers while they cut down the corn, speaking good of the name of the Lord and blessing him for his kindness to the children of men? Hark! is it the hymns of praise, which they are chanting in yonder field? Is the song they sing that song of the psalmist which has just been spoken of? Methinks instead of it some song, full of profaneness and obscenity, is sung aloud. The name of God indeed is on many lips, but it is only that it may be trifled with or blasphemed. What then, are these men gathering God's bounty, and in the same moment profaning his name? But follow them to the harvest home: Surely now at least they meet and offer up their prayer and thanksgiving, and while God is in the act of crowning the year with his bounty, each tongue is loud in talking of his mercy, and each grateful heart is swelling with his

praise. It is commonly reported, that there is no season of the year in which so much wickedness and drunkenness prevall among the farmers, as in that of bringing the harvest home. Are these then the returns which in this year also we are making to the Divine goodness? Is all our complaining of want, and our prayer to God for deliverance, to end in a drunken abuse of the mercies he so wonderfully bestows?

But not to dwell on vices which are so great, that we would willingly hope they must only be the vices of a few, let us a little consider also the *general* unworthiness of mankind. Who are they that will be fed by this abundant harvest? Will no idle persons be maintained by it? Will no finners have their strength sustained, so as to continue their life of sin? Will there be none who will eat with unthankful-

ness? None who, as the reapers have reaped it without thinking of the Author of the harvest, will in like manner feed upon it without thinking of the Author of their food? Again, will no discontented, murmuring, repining people be fed by this goodness of the Lord? Will all those, in short, whose life is prolonged by the bread now sent them, devote that life to the service of him who prolonged it? Surely if we could remove ourselves to a distance from the earth, and become by any means impartial judges between God and man, we should stand astonished at the present rebellion of the creature. He who made man, He who supports him, sending him the very bread which he eats, has a right to his services: and hath made him no doubt for his own glory. Methinks if any of us were endowed with power to create some little rational animal, inferior to ourselves,

and if, after having breathed into him the breath of life, we also daily clothed and nourished him, we should expect his obedience and constant service in return; and if, after all, such a being should presume to set up for himself, and pretend to have a will of his own, and break all the laws we had given him, we should be ready methinks to stamp our foot upon him, and to crush him to death at once, for not fulfilling the ends of his creation. We should have no patience with such a little insolent and rebellious animal. And yet God has patience with us, notwithstanding all our forgetfulness of the ends for which we were born, and our unthankfulness for the daily returns of his bounty. Nay, though we go on abusing his mercies, he goes on cloathing the pastures with his flocks. The vallies also are again covered over with corn; again they shout, for joy they also sing. O let us

be ashamed of the baseness of our ingratitude, and repent in the name of Christ, before the day of his vengeance is come upon us.

The season of harvest is also one which should lead us particularly to reflect on our *dependence upon God*. God gave us life at first. He causes our blood to flow, our heart to beat, and our stomach to distribute the nourishment. He too supplies the food we eat, of whatever kind it be. We may combine together different meats, we may dress them in a variety of ways, but we can create nothing. God is the only giver of life and food, and all things: and happy is that man who lives in the lively remembrance of this, who accepts all his comforts as from the hand of the great God, habitually feeling that he has not of himself power to subsist for a single moment, or to procure, independent

of God, one single drop of water, or grain of bread. And this sense of our dependence is not a duty only, it is a great comfort also: for how does it tend to relieve all that anxiety, which is so natural to us, about our subsistence in the time to come. The more we remember that we are the creatures of God, so much the more shall we trust to him to provide for his large family, even as a child trusts to the care and prudence of his parent. "Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."

Next to this sense of our dependence, *gratitude* to God may be mentioned as peculiarly becoming. Methinks at this time not only the heavens above, but the earth beneath, calls aloud upon us to be thankful.—Every field, every ear of corn, seems

to bid us speak the praises of God.—How do these glorify him, as it were, by an expressive though dumb offering of praise!—But man has a tongue with which he can speak forth the praises of his Maker. It is for the sake of man also that the store house of divine bounty is opened; it is for man that the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the vallies covered with corn; it is for man that the sun shines, and the showers descend. From him then should the offering of praise continually rise up.

“ But why will you suppose man-kind to be so unthankful?” methinks I hear some one reply, “ do you think we do not know as well as you that we ought to praise God for a good harvest? There will always indeed be a few wicked people in the land, but in general we understand well enough that it is

God who sends us bread, and all our mercies : nay, when any of us speak of having got a good crop, “ *thank God* ” is the very phrase that is quite common in our lips.”— I admit it is so, and I hope indeed that many thousand hearts have already offered up the sincere tribute of thanksgiving for the present plentiful season. But we cannot help adding here, that there is a way far beyond that of simple praise, by which true gratitude will manifest itself. It will break out not in words only but in deeds, in deeds I mean of obedience to him towards whom the gratitude is felt. What would any father think of the gratitude of a child, or any husband of the gratitude of a wife, which never shewed itself in any thing but a few warm expressions of obligation. No, it is by the readiness and activity in serving the person praised, and by the desire in all respects to please him,

that the disposition to gratitude must be judged of. A man may say, "*thank God*" twenty times a day, and yet never truly thank him in his heart. Words are cheap. Many men think to pay God off, as it were, by this sort of coin. Let it be remarked also, that there is a satisfaction and self-complacency which are naturally felt on receiving abundance of wealth into our lap: we are put into good humour by it, and when we are reminded that God is the author of our prosperity, the truth of this is so plain that we cannot deny it, and since our understandings agree to the observation we fancy that our hearts agree also; whereas, in fact, we only judge that God ought to be thanked, but we do not thank him, and as to the good-humour we are in, it arises merely from our being well pleased with ourselves, or with the enjoyments which God has given

is, and not from our being well pleased with God. That we practice some such frauds as these on ourselves is but too plain; for mark now what follows. When the same person who has been thanking God so often for his mercies, is by and by called to do something, to suffer something, or to give up something for the sake of serving this gracious Being to whom he professed such prodigious gratitude, he is then either too idle, or too selfish, or too much governed by the opinion of his fellow creatures, or some way or other too full of excuses to do what is wanted of him: on the other hand, when some temptation comes in his way he yields to it, and sins against the same God as freely as if he were under no obligation to him. Let us then beware of this hypocritical sort of gratitude, by which we cannot deceive God, though we often delude ourselves by it. Let us shew forth

his praise not only with our lips but with our lives. Let us shew our sense of his goodness by doing his will, by reading his word, by attending his worship, by readily denying ourselves for his sake, and in short by laying out our lives in his service, and by standing forth to promote his cause in a disobedient and unthankful world.

Here let it be hinted also, that this may be a good time for laying down our plans for using the plenty which is flowing in to us. God has now given us provision for another year, but for what purpose has he given it in order that we might eat and drink and be merry? what then have we not immortal souls? the great end of our Creator is, that we may serve him in this world, and may be prepared to dwell with him for ever in heaven. His direction is, that we should employ our health and strength, and all our

vigour of body and mind, in fulfilling
 his will; that we should seek in the
 first place to know God, and Jesus
 Christ, whom he hath sent into the
 world, and having learnt to know
 him, that we should then act in our
 several stations from the motive of
 love to his name, imitating also his
 bounty, by ministering to the neces-
 sities of our fellow creatures. Are
 these then our ends of living? Is this
 what we propose to ourselves? are
 these the views with which we reap
 the harvest? are we determined that
 none of it, as far as in us lies, shall be
 wasted in riot or in luxury, or in im-
 provident consumption? do we look
 forward to it as to a treasure, with
 which the hungry shall be fed, and
 the poor be satisfied? then indeed we
 may rejoice in the bounty of Heaven,
 and we may reasonably trust that all

the expressions of gratitude in our lips are sincere.

Again, let the consideration of the goodness of God, displayed in the fruits of the earth, raise our minds to the contemplation of those still greater mercies which he is able and willing to give us. It is with him a small matter to provide the earth with food, or to take care of the body. See what a rich provision he has made for our souls—for them he has not spared his only begotten Son, but given him up to be the propitiation for our sins! for the sake of the soul he has sent his holy spirit into the world, to guide men into the knowledge of truth. For the soul he has prepared an eternal harvest of blessings, “an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.” We may learn to value spiritual mercies

from what we see of temporal ones. Temporal ones strike the senses, and being suited to our present fallen nature, are more apt to fill our hearts with joy and gratitude. But we may rest assured that the blessings, which God has provided for the soul, are much superior to those provided for the body, as the soul is to the body, and as eternity is to time. Let us then turn from this earthly scene of abundance to still nobler and larger blessings. Let the fields not only preach to us the immense goodness of our Creator, but let them send our thoughts also to the "unsearchable riches that are in Christ." Let the harvest serve to impress a thoughtless world with wonder, gratitude, reverence, and love to Him who is the author, not of all our earthly treasures only, but of all the blessings of eternity! In

short, let the goodness of God lead
 us all to repentance, and let each of
 us take care that the mercies of his
 Maker be not turned into a curse,
 by rendering our hearts, only so much
 the more full of this world, and more
 indifferent to the blessings of the
 Gospel.

THE END

A
HYMN OF PRAISE

FOR THE

ABUNDANT HARVEST OF 1796.

AFTER A YEAR OF SCARCITY

IN ENGLAND.

Great God! when famine threaten'd late
To scourge our guilty land,
O did we learn from that dark fate
To dread thy mighty hand?

Did then our sins to mem'ry rise?
Or own'd we God was just?
Or rais'd we penitential cries?
Or bow'd we in the dust?

Did we forsake one evil path,
Was any sin abhorr'd?
Or did we deprecate thy wrath,
And turn us to the Lord?

'Tis true we fail'd not to *repine*,
 But did we too *repent*?
 Or own the chastisement divine
 In awful judgment sent?

Tho' the bright chain of Peace is broke,
 And War with ruthless sword
 Unpeoples nations at a stroke,
 Yet who regards the Lord?

But God, who in his strict decrees
 Remembers mercy still,
 Can, in a moment, if he please,
 Our hearts with comfort fill.

He mark'd our angry spirits rise,
 Domestic hate encrease;
 And for a time withheld supplies,
 To teach us love and peace.

He, when he brings his children low,
 Has blessings still in store;
 And when he strikes the heaviest blow,
 He does but love us more.

Now, Frost, and Flood, and blight no more
 Our golden harvests spoil;

See, what an unexampled store
Reward the reaper's toil!

As when the promis'd harvest fail'd
In Canaan's fruitful land;
The envious Patriarchs were assail'd
By famine's pressing hand!

The angry brother's then forgot
Each fierce and jarring feud;
United by their adverse lot,
They lov'd as brothers shou'd.

So here, from Heaven's correcting hand,
Tho' famine fail'd to move;
Let plenty now throughout the land,
Rekindle peace and love.

Like the rich fool, let us not say,
Soul! thou hast goods in store!
But shake the overplus away,
To feed the aged poor.

Let rich and poor, on whom are now
Such bounteous crops bestow'd,
Raise many a pure and holy vow
In gratitude to God!

And while his gracious name we praise
 For bread so kindly given ;
 Let us beseech him all our days,
 To give the bread of heaven.

In that blest prayer our Lord did frame,
 Of all our prayers the guide,
 We ask that " hallow'd be *his* name,"
 And then our wants supplied.

For grace he bids us first implore,
 Next, that we may be fed ;
 We say, " Thy will be done," before
 We ask " our daily bread."

TRUE HEROES;

OR, THE

NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS.

YOU who love a tale of glory,
Listen to the song I sing;
Heroes of the Christian story,
Are the heroes whom I bring.

Warriors of the world, avaunt!
Other heroes me engage;
'Tis not such as you I want,
Saints and Martyrs grace my page.

Warriors who the world subdue,
Were but vain and selfish elves;

While my heroes good and true,
Greater far, subdu'd themselves.

Fearful christian! hear with wonder,
Of the faints of whom I tell;
Some were burnt, some fawn afunder,
Some by fire or torture fell.

Some to savage beasts were hurl'd,
Some surviv'd the lion's den;
Was a persecuting world,
Worthy of these wond'rous men?

Some in fiery furnace thrown,
Yet escap'd, unsing'd their hair;
There Almighty power was shown,
For the son of God was there.

Now we crown with deathless fame,
Those who scorn'd and hated fell;
Worldlings fear contempt and shame,
Martyrs fear but sin and hell.

How the shower of stones descended,
Holy Stephen on thy head!
While thy tongue the truth defended,
How the glorious Martyr bled!

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See his fierce reviler Saul,
 How he rails with impious breath!
 Then observe converted Paul,
 Oft in perils, oft in death.

God alone, whose sovereign power,
 Did the lion's fury swage,
 Could alone in one short hour,
 Still the persecutor's rage,

Ev'n a woman—women hear,
 Read in Maccabees the story!
 Conquer'd nature, love, and fear,
 To obtain a crown of glory.

Seven stout sons she saw expire,
 (How the mother's soul was pain'd!)
 Some by sword, and some by fire,
 How the Martyr was sustain'd!

Even in death's acutest anguish,
 Each the tyrant still defy'd;
 Each she saw in torture languish,
 Last of all the mother dy'd.

Martyrs who were thus arrested,
 In their short but bright career,
 By their blood the truth attested,
 Prov'd their faith and love sincere.

Tho' their lot was hard and lowly,
 Tho' they perish'd at the stake;
 Now they live with God in glory,
 Since they suffer'd for his sake.

Fierce and unbelieving foes,
 But their bodies could destroy;
 Short, tho' bitter were their woes,
 Everlasting is their joy.

THE END.

Next week will be publish'd The History of
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